The Religion Department of St. Olaf College seeks to enliven and deepen academic reflection on religion and theology in a liberal arts setting. We equip students of all backgrounds and traditions to interpret, evaluate, and respond to religious ideas and practices.

Our work is shaped by the college's Lutheran heritage and commitments as these unfold in a world of many faiths. In teaching and scholarship, we take up the college's founding conviction that scholarly study of religion is basic to liberal arts learning. Through general education courses and the religion major, we advance the college's goal of cultivating theological literacy. At the center of this work is scholarly study of the Bible and of Christian theology, understood as reasoned reflection on the meaning and truth of Christian faith. We also study Jewish, Islamic, Hindu, and Buddhist traditions, and regard the opportunities afforded by comparative study and religious dialogue as essential to our common goals of understanding religion and theology. Members of the department work with many religious traditions and areas of specialization, and all contribute to the college's general education requirements in religion.

Overview of the Major

Since the study of religion involves the use of a variety of methodologies and intersects with many other fields of study, students often find that a major in religion helps them integrate their work in other disciplines and develop a focus for their whole liberal arts education. Many students also choose to major in religion as a preparation for seminary or graduate work in religion.

Intended Learning Outcomes for the Major

Distinction

See Academic Honors

Religion majors may graduate with distinction if their grade point average is 3.5 in religion and they submit a research project that meets the approval of a departmental review committee. The Junia Prize is usually awarded annually to the best distinction project of the year.

Special Programs

The Religion Department participates in Foreign Language Across the Curriculum Program, which offers students the opportunity to use their foreign language skills in selected courses. Each year the department offers Interim courses abroad, some carrying general education credit.

Recommendations for Graduate Study

The religion major offers excellent preparation in breadth and depth of study for graduate programs. We encourage students to take additional level III courses, religion seminars, independent studies, and to develop competence in a foreign language. Distinction in religion is also recommended. Students should consult with their academic advisor and the religion department chair on specific programs and interests.

Requirements

The religion major consists of eight courses and requires both broad exposure to major approaches to studying religion and concentrated study in some aspect of religion. The requirements are organized in five parts as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>REL 121</td>
<td>Bible in Culture and Community (BTS-B)</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>REL 285</td>
<td>What is Religion? Approaches and Methods</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Courses that focus on three different dimensions of religion (and deal with at least two different religious traditions):</td>
<td>3.00</td>
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<td>Sacred texts</td>
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<td>Religious in history and culture</td>
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<td>Religious thought</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intensive studies in religion:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Select at least two level III courses, at least one of which must be a seminar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Credits</td>
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<td>8</td>
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Courses

Religion courses fulfill a variety of general education requirements. The department offers several options to complete the Biblical Studies (BTS-B), Theological Studies (BTS-T), and Ethical Issues (Ein) requirements. Additional courses count towards requirements in Historical Studies in Western Culture (HWC), Multicultural Studies (MCD; MCG), and Literary Studies (ALS-L).

REL 121: Bible in Culture and Community

This course introduces first-year students to the dialogue between Biblical traditions and the cultures and communities related to them. Students study major Biblical texts and their interaction with, for example, theology, religious practice, ethics, and social values, while considering methods and fields in the study of religion in a liberal arts setting. Thematic emphases differ based on section and instructor.

REL 202: Classics and Moderns

This course introduces the central matters for argument in Christian theology -- God and Christ -- through close reading and critical analysis of selected classic (pre-1700) and modern theological texts. Students focus on the reasons supporting classic Christian beliefs about God, Christ and related topics and on the modern theological criticism of those beliefs. Is it still possible to be a Christian in the beginning of the 21st century? Offered periodically.

Prerequisite: BTS-B.
REL 205: Blessed are the Happy? Virtue, Happiness, & Good Life in Christian Tht
In this course students examine Christians’ enduring concern over such matters as what happiness is; the role, if any, virtues play in the lives of Christians and their lives with God. Topics include the early church’s response to Greek philosophy, interpretations of sin, Christ’s humanity, and human flourishing. Students also examine how these theological conversations continue to shape modern reflection on what makes a person happy and a life well-lived. Offered periodically. 
Prerequisite: BTS-B.

REL 207: Christian Theology and the Moral Life
Examining essential Christian beliefs with special attention to their implications for the moral life, students in this course analyze the meaning and truth of Christian symbols and claims about God, Christ, creation, fall, providence, redemption, etc., and explore their bearing upon ethical principles and principles, moral character and community and societal institutions and practices. Readings include classical and contemporary Christian theological sources. Offered periodically. 
Prerequisite: BTS-B.

REL 208: Christian Theology and Human Existence
This course traces the significance of essential Christian theological doctrines (e.g., God, Christ, sin, salvation) for contemporary understandings of human beings and human behavior. Selected comparisons with alternative and/or complementary views of human nature (for example, philosophical, psychological, sociological, literary) are also included. Offered periodically. 
Prerequisite: BTS-B.

REL 209: Introduction to Feminist Theology
Students examine traditional Christian doctrines in light of feminist critiques and reformulations. The course focuses especially upon language and images of God, the person of Christ and the work of redemption and understandings of human nature. Students evaluate arguments for and against the compatibility of Christianity and feminism. Offered periodically. Also counts toward women’s and gender studies major and concentration. 
Prerequisite: BTS-B.

REL 210: Theology of Food
Food holds a central place in many world religions. In their feasts and fasts, holy and forbidden foods, community suppers, festivals, and food shelves, people of faith develop and express their theologies. This course examines food beliefs and practices for religion, in particular the theological significance of food in Christianity and how it compares with other faith traditions. The relation of food to the doctrines of God, Christ, and salvation will have special attention. Offered periodically during Interim. 
Prerequisite: BTS-B.

REL 212: Christian Theology in Historical Context
This course offers an overview of the development of Christian thought and practice in the ancient, medieval and modern periods and analyzes the way Christian beliefs have evolved in response to changing historical situations. Special consideration is given to how different theological perspectives have influenced the activities of religious communities and lives of notable individuals. Offered periodically. 
Prerequisite: BTS-B.

REL 213: Lutheran Heritage
Analyzing continuity and change within the Lutheran tradition, students consider Luther’s theology and proposals for the reform of Catholicism and evaluate major reappraisals of Lutheran beliefs and practices that developed in response to new issues and social situations. Topics include Orthodoxy and Pietism, conservative and liberal responses to the Enlightenment, modern European Lutheranism and issues of particular importance to Lutheranism in Scandinavia, America, and developing countries. Offered periodically during Interim. Also counts toward German studies concentration. 
Prerequisite: BTS-B.

REL 214: Reformation Theology
Students analyze 16th-century reform movements in light of their theological and historical contexts and their significance for contemporary theology. The course focuses on contributions and lives of the major figures in the Protestant Reformations (e.g., Luther, Calvin, Zwingli) and the Roman Catholic Reform. Offered periodically. Also counts toward German studies concentration. 
Prerequisite: BTS-B.

REL 215: Christian and Islamic Ethics: Conflicts and Cross-Pollination
This course compares Christian and Islamic conceptions of the relationship between God and humanity, as foundations for thinking about moral excellence and obligation. It also considers and compares how theological commitments and methods in each religious tradition affect approaches to particular ethical issues such as sexuality, war, and politics. Students work with scripture, film, polemical literature, judicial texts, and theological texts. Offered periodically. 
Prerequisites: BTS-T or permission of instructor.

REL 218: Political and Liberation Theology
This course examines the rise of political and liberation theology movements, the situations and issues to which they respond, theological formulations of political/liberation theologies, and the relationship of these theologies to traditional Christian doctrines. Special focus on the relationship between the theological and political, nature of christology and redemption, images and role of God, and understandings of human nature. Offered periodically. 
Prerequisite: BTS-B.

REL 220: Reading Our Origins: Genesis, God, and Human Nature
This course introduces students to the theological interpretation of Genesis. Topics include history of the book’s composition; its distinctive emphases and themes; the history of its interpretation and cultural influence, particularly on questions of human nature, sin, divine promise, and faith; and current issues (i.e., ecojustice, race, gender and sexuality, human identity and difference). Theoretical issues related to biblical authority and the role of the interpreter are also addressed. Offered periodically. 
Prerequisite: BTS-B.

REL 221: Jesus in Scripture and Tradition
This course explores the meaning and significance of Jesus Christ in major New Testament writings: the Gospels, the letters of Paul, Hebrews, Revelation. Students also examine the development of New Testament ideas about Christ in subsequent Christian tradition, both classical and contemporary. Offered annually. Also counts toward ancient studies major. 
Prerequisite: BTS-B.
REL 222: The Biblical God
Students examine key texts in the Old and New Testaments with the aim of exploring the issues such writings pose for Christian theological reflection. In addition, they explore selected readings on the doctrine of scripture and language about God. Offered periodically. Also counts toward ancient studies major.
Prerequisite: BTS-B.

REL 223: Paul: His Letters, His Gospel
Students read Pauline letters carefully for their major issues, such as apocalyptic, gospel, apostleship, Jew and Gentile, faith, Torah, community. Considering Paul in the context of his times and Paul in the context of later Christianity, students discuss topics such as Jews and Christians, men and women, creation, grace in Paul, and present-day experience. Offered periodically. Also counts toward ancient studies major.
Prerequisite: BTS-B.

REL 225: God, Evil, and Human Suffering
How do evil and the suffering that accompanies it affect our sense of the meaning and value of human life? Do religious ideas -- such as the idea of an all-powerful and all-loving God, or the claim that Jesus died on the cross for human sins -- help address these challenges or make them worse? Students explore ways that Christians, Jews, and Muslims have attempted to respond to these questions using philosophical, theological, literary, and visual strategies, and they also examine critiques of religious perspectives. Offered periodically.
Prerequisite: BTS-B.

REL 227: Moses and Jesus: Jews and Christians in Dialogue
This course explores the interaction between Jews, Christians, and their respective religions in historical and theological perspective. Students consider basic features of Jewish belief and practice, past and present views of Jews and Christians about each other's beliefs, impact of Christian attitudes toward the Jews on the formation and development of Christian doctrines, relation between Christian theology and anti-Semitism, and the possibilities for a new relationship between Christians and Jews. Offered periodically. Also counts toward ancient studies major.
Prerequisite: BTS-B.

REL 230: Theology of Creation
Christians affirm that God created the world in and through Christ and continues to sustain it by the Holy Spirit. This course attends to the themes of creation and new creation in relation to Biblical texts, to problems posed by science (including evolution and Creationism), and the theological reflections of the created world as fallen and redeemed. Major attention is paid to classic and modern theological discussions of creation and new creation. Offered periodically.
Prerequisite: BTS-B.

REL 231: Religion at the US-Mexico Border
This course examines the US-Mexico border (construed physically and abstractly) as a site of religious engagement, reflecting on analyses of the border as both a political construct and a racial one that shapes the idea of 'American' identity. Students consider diverse religious views, including those who cross the border, those left behind, those who live near it, and those who fear and want to end its permeability. This course includes an ethnographic component. Either Saturday or Sunday field experiences are required for this course. Offered periodically. Also counts toward Latin American studies and race and ethnic studies majors and Latin American studies and race and ethnic studies concentrations.
Prerequisite: BTS-B.

REL 232: The Insurgent Multiculturalism of Beloved Community
Do multicultural church congregations foster the racial reconciliation found in the concept of Beloved Community made famous by Martin Luther King, Jr.? Or do they function to assimilate minority cultures into the dominant white American culture? In this course, students examine sociological and ethnographic evidence from Christian congregations involved in multicultural projects. They learn to read these projects as lived theological expressions and critically analyze them. Offered periodically. Also counts toward race and ethnic studies major and concentration.
Prerequisites: BTS-B and FYW.

REL 233: God and Faith in Autobiography
This course focuses on autobiographical texts in which the writer describes his or her life in relationship to God. The course is based on the central Christian theological belief that God is known in historical experience. Students study the different ways in which Christians have sought to understand God's role in their lives by correlating their own experiences with the classic beliefs, symbols, and values of the Christian faith. Offered periodically.
Prerequisite: BTS-B.

REL 238: Tolkien and Theology
Nordic sagas and modern fantastic works pose important theological questions such as the nature of reality in fantasy, the Eucharist, honor, gift, the grotesque, evil, salvation in Christ, and life as a quest and pilgrimage. They also raise valuable problems about the relationship of Christian beliefs to cultural narratives. Students may read J.R.R. Tolkien's Lord of the Rings, G.K. Chesterton, and selected sagas, alongside theological writings. Offered periodically during Interim.
Prerequisite: BTS-B.

REL 242: The Religious and the Political: Gandhi, Niebuhr, and King
This course explores the interface between religion and politics in the lives and thought of Mahatma Gandhi, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Focus will be upon the distinctive ways in which each one appropriated the theological resources of his tradition to justify and analyze the connection between religion and politics. Offered periodically.
Prerequisite: BTS-B.

REL 243: Living Faith: Theology and Practice at Holden Village (off campus)
This course examines how religious faith transforms the practices of personal and social life. Students explore the nature of Christian community and the connections between Christian theological beliefs and practices. Students participate in the life of Holden Village, an isolated Lutheran retreat center in the Cascade Mountains of Washington. Offered alternate years during Interim. Apply through International and Off-Campus Studies.
Prerequisite: BTS-B.
REL 244: Theology after the Death of God
The death of God refers to both the absence of God in a post-Christian culture and the death of Jesus on the cross. These two meanings have a significance for the religious and non-religious alike. Students evaluate the challenges that the death of God has for the concept of God, the meaning and purpose of Jesus, religious belief, reason, and the secular by reading classical and contemporary theological work on the death of Jesus and the death of God. Offered periodically.
Prerequisite: BTS-B.

REL 245: Theology of Religions & Interreligious Dialogue
Christians and people of other faiths seek to be faithful to their own traditions and also to attend to each other's claims. This course examines ways Christians and other believers develop their doctrinal traditions in the context of religious pluralism. This course gives specific attention to Christian reflection on the doctrines of God, Christ, and salvation in relation to religious reflection by people of other faiths. Offered periodically.
Prerequisite: BTS-B.

REL 246: Islam -- Religion and Community
Students examine the formation of Islamic traditions and institutions and their religious meaning, paying special attention to the dynamism and crises of Islam in the 19th and 20th centuries. Offered periodically. Also counts toward medieval studies major.
Prerequisite: BTS-B.

REL 248: Judaism
This survey of the historical, cultural, and theological developments within Judaism pays special attention to major periods and themes in Jewish life and thought, as well as to contemporary Judaism. Also counts toward Middle Eastern studies concentration.
Prerequisite: BTS-B. Open to first-year students with permission of the instructor.

AS/RE 250: Zen Masters and Criticism
This course invites students to examine the figure of the Zen Buddhist master as a literary and performative figure. In addition to a broad overview of the historical development of Zen Buddhism, students use case studies of Zen masters to explore questions of power, authority, and gender. Offered periodically during Interim. Counts toward Asian studies and religion majors and Asian studies concentration.
Prerequisite: BTS-B.

REL 252: Religion, Violence, and Peace
This course examines the relationship between religion and violence across diverse global contexts. Students consider whether some dimensions of religion - monotheistic belief or rituals of sacrifice, for example - are more prone to produce violent conflict than others; explore debates over how to measure the power of religion vis-a-vis other drivers of behavior; and discuss ethical arguments about justified violence, suffering, and peace-building, focusing on how religious ideas and practices contribute to these debates. Offered periodically.
Prerequisite: BTS-T or permission of the instructor.

REL 253: Religions of India
The course introduces students to the religious traditions of India through lectures, readings, discussions, and excursions, including interaction with leaders of religious communities. Indian religious scholars and practitioners provide background for understanding the history, beliefs, and practices of major religious traditions of India, including Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity, and Indian perspectives on religious pluralism and interfaith relations. Offered periodically during Interim. Also counts toward Asian studies major and concentration.
Prerequisite: completion of BTS-B.

AS/RE 253: Hinduism
This course, surveying the general nature and assumptions of Hindu thought, focuses on the diversity of doctrines and practices within some of its major traditions. Students analyze selections from authoritative Sanskrit texts like the Upanishads and Bhagavad-gita, directing special attention to the central issues and developments in Hindu-Christian dialogue. Offered periodically. Counts toward Asian studies and religion majors and Asian studies concentration.

AS/RE 254: Jesus on the Indian Road: A Perspective on Christianity
The Indian Church, which claims the apostle Thomas as its founder, is the 'home base' for this historical exploration of Christianity from the apostolic age to the present. The course considers Christian teachings about God and Jesus, biblical interpretation, worship, response to social, political, and cultural practices through encounters between Indian Christians and other churches. The multiple religions of India, its colonial experience, and its contemporary society are essential context. Offered periodically. Counts toward Asian studies and religion majors and Asian studies concentration.
Prerequisite: BTS-B.

REL 255: Beauty, Arts, and Religion
Are the arts a distraction from or essential to being religious? This course examines how theologians, philosophers, and artists articulate a diversity of answers to this question. Doing so, the class examines ways to interpret the religious meaning and purpose of art. Students encounter different ideas about the value of beauty, the importance of creativity, the moral and cultural relevance of art, and whether art offers a revelation beyond the material world. Offered periodically.
Prerequisite: BTS-B.

AS/RE 256: Religions of China and Japan
This course introduces the religious and philosophical traditions of China and Japan: Confucianism, Chinese Taoism, Buddhism, Japanese Shinto, and the folk traditions. Students read classical texts such as Zhuangzi and Mencius and analyze fundamental values and concepts such as Tao, yin/yang, and humaneness. Offered periodically. Counts toward Asian studies, Chinese, Japanese, and religion majors and Asian studies concentration.
AS/RE 257: Buddhism
This course studies the Buddhist view of the human predicament and its solution. Students examine the life of the Buddha, Buddhist scriptures, and the historical and philosophical development of Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism in East and Southeast Asia. Offered periodically. Counts toward Asian studies, Chinese, Japanese, and religion majors and Asian studies concentration.

REL 260: Religion in America
This course introduces students to the history of religion in America in the context of American culture, paying attention to the formal structures and to questions of what ‘being religious’ has meant to Americans. The course considers the range of religious traditions in the U.S.A. while attending to the Christian majority and variety within it. The course focuses specifically on the experiences and contributions of women and minorities. Offered periodically.
Prerequisite: BTS-B.

REL 263: Roman Catholic Theology
Students consider the present situation and future prospects of Roman Catholic theology through an engagement with the figures and events that have most deeply shaped Catholic theology in the 20th and 21st centuries. The course also examines recent Catholic views on the central topics of Christian theology, God, Christ, salvation and the Church, and the relationship of these views to Protestant ideas about the same issues. Offered periodically.
Prerequisite: BTS-B.

REL 264: Theology and Sexuality
This course addresses theological understandings of love, desire, embodiment, and relationship in the context of human sexuality. Students study classic theological treatments of sexuality, with attention to the tensions among divergent appraisals of sex; and they study contemporary theological discussions about subjects that have given rise to controversy, such as marriage, gender, same-sex relations, family, or commodification. Also counts toward women's and gender studies major and concentration.
Prerequisite: BTS-B.

REL 271: Bible in Context: Hist/Geography/Culture in Israel & Palestine (abroad)
This course studies the historical, geographical, and cultural background of Judaism and Christianity, focusing on major biblical sites in the Holy Land. Through the intersection of textual study, archaeology, and history, students explore biblical events from the time of Israel's ancestors to Jesus and the early church in, for example, Jerusalem, Galilee, and Jordan. The course also examines the history of conflict among Jews, Christians, and Muslims over the meaning and possession of the land. Offered alternate years during Interim. Also counts toward ancient studies major.
Prerequisite: BTS-B.

REL 272: Sacred Places in Greece and Turkey (abroad)
This course explores the notion of sacred places and examines specific sites sacred to ancient people, to Christians, Muslims, and Jews. Students visit both natural places and constructed sites (i.e., temples, churches, mosques, and synagogues). Students attend to scholarly theory, sites' physical characteristics and history, ongoing human interaction, inter-religious dynamics, and their own responses. The interplay of religion, social life, and political power relative to sacred space provides additional thematic focus. Offered alternate years during Interim. Apply through International and Off-Campus Studies. Also counts toward ancient studies major.
Prerequisite: BTS-B.

REL 273: Hebrew Prophets in History and Christian Tradition
Students examine the theological significance of the Israelite prophetic literature by tracing its origin and composition in ancient Israelite contexts, its appropriation and reinterpretation in the New Testament writings in light of early Christian experiences of Jesus Christ, and its continuing influence on postbiblical Christian worship and theology. Offered periodically. Also counts toward ancient studies major.
Prerequisite: BTS-B.

REL 275: Religion and Empire in Greece (abroad)
This course studies the New Testament in light of its cultural, political, and religious contexts, with a special focus on the intersection of religion and empire. Utilizing the tools of postcolonial interpretation, it focuses on the question, “How did followers of Jesus live out their faith in the complex religious, political, social and economic contexts of the Roman Empire? Visits to archaeological and cultural sites throughout Greece enable students to explore: 1) the relationship of politics, culture and religion in the Book of Acts, the Letters of Paul, and other writings of the New Testament and antiquity; and 2) the religious pluralism of the first century Roman world, including the Jewish and Hellenistic contexts with which the New Testament authors are engaged. The course also studies other significant developments in the early church of this region, provides encounters with the Greek Orthodox branch of Christianity, and explores biblical, cultural, and social relationships between Christianity, Islam and Judaism. Offered periodically during Interim. Apply through International and Off-Campus Studies. Also counts toward ancient studies major.
Prerequisite: BTS-B.

REL 276: The Ethics of Jesus
This course examines the ethical teachings of Jesus as found in the canonical Gospels (with special focus on the Sermon on the Mount), explores how these teachings have been understood at some major moments in Western history, and brings them to bear on the task of contemporary ethical reflection. Issues examined include, for example, non-violence, social and economic justice, sexuality, and ethnic conflict. Offered periodically. Also counts toward ancient studies major.
Prerequisites: completion of BTS-T or permission of instructor.

REL 277: Travel and Ethics
This course examines ethical issues raised by travel as well as the ways that various ethical perspectives address these issues. Students consider the ethics of pilgrimage in world religions, tourism and its critics, Christian perspectives on intercultural travel, issues raised by study abroad, and theories of ethical travel in relation to ecotourism, sustainability, service, and other ideals. Offered periodically.
Prerequisite: BTS-T.

REL 280: Religion and Literature
Students explore the religious significance of selected works of literature and examine how literary plot, character, symbolism, and theme raise religious questions, reveal ethical concerns and imply theological convictions. Offered periodically.

REL 282: Obama's Theologian: Reinhold Niebuhr
Reinhold Niebuhr was arguably the most important American Christian theologian of the 20th century. He continues to inspire in the 21st with Barack Obama himself claiming Niebuhr as a central intellectual, moral, and spiritual influence. This course examines Niebuhr’s ‘Christian Realism’ and the implications of that view for understanding God, Christ, creation, sin, nature, grace, history, love, justice, and morality in economics, war, domestic politics, and international relations. Offered periodically.
Prerequisite: BTS-B.
REL 285: What is Religion? Approaches and Methods
A study of competing and complementary approaches to the study of religion prevalent in the contemporary academy, this course prepares sophomore and junior religion majors for more advanced research seminars. Paying attention to the emphases and presuppositions of each approach, students develop an improved ability to understand the way that these different approaches affect scholarship and contribute to agreements and disagreements about what religion is and should be. Offered annually.
Prerequisite: BTS-B or permission of instructor.

AS/RE 289: Buddhism, Peace and Justice
Students examine contemporary Buddhist moral teachings on social issues such as violence and peacemaking, human rights and social justice, and humanity and the environment. Coursework focuses on the writings of Vietnamese monk and peace activist Thich Nhat Hanh, Tibetan leader-in-exile Tenzin Gyatso (Fourteenth Dalai Lama), American ecologist Joanna Macy, and others. Students consider the moral paradigms of Christianity and Buddhism: Christ and the Bodhisattva. Offered annually. Counts toward Asian studies, Chinese, Japanese, and religion majors and Asian studies concentration.
Prerequisite: BTS-T or permission of instructor.

REL 293: Religious Pluralism and the Nature of Community
The nature and boundaries of communities, as well as the quality of relationships within communities, are determined by theology as well as by social, political, and ethnic factors. Students examine the ways in which the world's religions, particularly Christianity, have interpreted each other's significance and truth claims and considers the ethical implications of these different responses. Offered periodically.
Prerequisite: BTS-T or permission of instructor.

REL 294: Academic Internship

REL 296: Love, Justice and Social Relations
This course examines theological and ethical aspects of Christian social responsibility. It examines the meaning and normative import of Christian faith for justice and love in relational spheres (politics, economics, marriage and family, gender relations). It also explores the ethical implications of central Christian doctrines (vocation, sin, grace, two kingdoms, creation). Issues raised include civil disobedience, use of lethal force, distributive justice, love and self-sacrifice, and gender roles. Offered periodically.
Prerequisites: BTS-T or permission of instructor.

REL 298: Independent Study

REL 302: History of Christian Thought I
Students critically analyze the development of Christian thought from its beginnings to the 9th century. Special attention is placed on the theological controversies which led to the formation of the Christian community's central doctrines: God as Trinity, Jesus Christ as divine and human, salvation as divine action and human response. Students read from Irenaeus, Origen, Athanasius, Augustine, and others. Offered periodically. Also counts toward ancient studies and medieval studies majors.
Prerequisite: BTS-B.

REL 303: History of Christian Thought II
This course provides a critical analysis of the development of Christian thought in the Middle Ages and Reformation, 11th through 16th centuries. Particular attention is paid to the great theological systems of the Middle Ages and to the theological aims of the 16th-century reforming movements, drawing upon readings from Anselm, Aquinas, Bonaventure, Luther, Calvin, and others. Offered periodically. Also counts toward medieval studies major.
Prerequisite: BTS-B.

REL 304: History of Christian Thought III
This course offers a critical analysis of the development of Christian thought in the modern period, 17th century to 1970. Students pay special attention to the rise of modern historical and philosophical outlooks that challenge traditional Christian claims and to the appropriation and criticism of these outlooks in modern theology. Students read from Edwards, Schleiermacher, Barth, Bultmann, and others. Offered periodically.
Prerequisite: BTS-B.

REL 320: Interpreting Sacred Texts
Careful study of selected sacred texts provides students with the opportunity to learn and use various tools and methods of interpretation. Students increase their understanding of the origins, structure, use and interpretation of sacred texts in various religious communities. Specific texts and traditions vary. Students may repeat the course with different primary texts. Offered periodically. Also counts toward ancient studies major.
Prerequisite: BTS-B.

REL 344: Feminist Perspectives and Christian Ethics
How might the Christian ethical systems that have dominated western culture look different if women's experiences and perspectives had been more centrally included? This course focuses on the continuities and contrasts between traditional Jewish and Christian ethics and the feminist and womanist ethical challenges to them which have emerged over the last quarter century. Offered periodically. Also counts toward women's and gender studies major and concentration.
Prerequisite: BTS-T or permission of instructor.

Level III Seminars for Majors

REL 390: History of Religions Seminar
May be repeated if topic is different.
Prerequisite: BTS-B.

REL 391: Biblical Seminar
May be repeated if topic is different. Also counts toward ancient studies major.
Prerequisite: BTS-B.

REL 392: Studies in Religion Seminar
May be repeated if topic is different. May count toward ancient studies and medieval studies majors.
Prerequisite: BTS-B.

REL 393: Theological Seminar
May be repeated if topic is different.
Prerequisite: BTS-B.

REL 394: Academic Internship

REL 395: Ethics Seminar
May be repeated if topic is different.
Prerequisite: BTS-T.
**REL 396: Directed Undergraduate Research**

This course provides a comprehensive research opportunity, including an introduction to relevant background material, technical instruction, identification of a meaningful project, and data collection. The topic is determined by the faculty member in charge of the course and may relate to his/her research interests. Offered based on department decision. May be offered as a 1.00 credit course or .50 credit course. **Prerequisite:** determined by individual instructor.

**REL 397: Religion in Dialogue**

May be repeated if topics are different. **Prerequisite:** BTS-B.

**REL 398: Independent Research**

**REL 399: Thematic Seminar**

This integrative seminar focuses on the pursuit of research, the explanation of research to fellow students and the exploration of connections among diverse approaches to the selected topic, which changes annually. May be repeated if topic is different. May count toward ancient studies and medieval studies majors. **Prerequisite:** BTS-B.

**Faculty**

**Chair, 2019-2020**

**Jamie A. Schillinger**
Associate Professor of Religion
Christian thought and ethics; Islamic thought and ethics

**Andres Albertsen**
Adjunct Instructor in Religion

**Anthony Bateza**
Assistant Professor of Religion
Reformation studies

**Patricia Z. Beckman**
Associate Professor of Practice in Religion
Christian mysticism; history of Christianity; women and religions

**David Booth**
Associate Professor of Religion
History of theology; philosophy and psychology of religion; feminist theology; theology and sexuality

**Ryan S. Dulkin**
Adjunct Assistant Professor of Religion

**Kelly W. Figueroa-Ray**
Visiting Assistant Professor of Religion

**James S. Hanson** (on leave spring)
Associate Professor of Religion
New Testament

**Benjamin E. Heidgerken**
Visiting Assistant Professor of Religion

**PJ Johnston**
Visiting Assistant Professor of Religion

**Kiara Jorgenson**
Assistant Professor of Religion and Environmental Studies

**L. DeAné Lagerquist**
Professor of Religion
Church history; American religion; Christianity in India; Lutheranism

**Margaret S. Odell**
Professor of Religion
Old Testament

**Anantanand Rambachan**
Professor of Religion
Hinduism

**Barbara Reed**
Professor of Religion and Asian Studies
Buddhism; East Asian religions; women and religion in Asia; religious myths and rituals; Taoist literature

**Jason J. Ripley**
Associate Professor of Religion
Biblical theology; Gospel of John; imperial; gender; postcolonial interpretation

**Edmund N. Santurri**
Professor of Religion and Philosophy
Ethics; philosophical theology

**Douglas J. Schuurman**
Professor of Religion
History of ethical theory; vocation; theology and ethics; theology and science

**Gregory A. Walter**
Professor of Religion
Theology

**Charles A. Wilson**
Professor of Religion
Theology